DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 026 904 FL 001 118

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An Address to the Classical Association of Western New York.

Canisius Coll., Buffalo, N.Y.
Pub Date Apr 66
Note-8p.
Journal Cit-Canisius College Language Methods Newsletter; v3 n2 p1-8 April 1966
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.50
Descriptors-*Ancient History, Classical Languages, *Classical Literature, Diachronic Linguistics, Humanities, Indo European Languages, *Language Classification, Language Instruction, Language Role, *Latin, *Literary History

Highlighting this article which argues in defense of classical language, literature, and cultural studies is a brief description of the history and development of the Latin language, its emergence into modern tongues, its direct Etruscan derivation, and its fixed and formal nature. Other topics treated briefly include a distinction made between Latin and Roman, the cultural and educational mores of the Romans, Latin literary masterpieces, a classification of the Indo-European languages, the classics as a basis for Arts and Sciences curriculums, and a review of the humanistic revival movements. (DS)

From: Canisius College Language Methods Newsletter, Volume 3, Number 2 (April 1966): 1-8

AN ADDRESS TO THE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION OF WESTERN NEW YORK

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Generally speaking, our topic deals with the history of the Latin language and its emergence into the modern tongues. That is a complex subject, often obscure, often untraceable, but always complex. It covers not just centuries but millenia; and I would not put myself in so reprehensible a position as to say that I shall try to do more than attempt to point out the magnitude of the material, and illustrate in a cursory manner the facts, half facts, opinions, and conjectures which scholars have produced throughout the centuries--that, and to point up further the many problems of linguistics still awaiting research--research according to the traditional means of comparative philology, research with the use of modern techniques and devices; but always with this in mind--that in the end it is always the critical analytic insight and the creative ability of the human mind which solves the problem, any problem. Not the machine, not the Univac, but the intellect of man.

Since language is our topic, what is language? There are many possible definitions. Let us settle for one conveniently--"the means of human communication, spoken or written." Again, as to its origin, there are many opinions, ancient and modern, from the Tower of Babel, the Cratylus of Plato, the De Rerum Natura of Lucretius, Bk. V, all the way to Profs. Kent, Sturtevant, and Whatmough, not to mention more recent theories.

For time and simplicity we must avoid the argument here and settle for the thesis that language is human and came from man's need to express himself to others. The various sounds became conventional within the respective groups, and such was their language. Depending upon geography and intergroup communication, languages are basically similar or dissimilar. The written word was first the drawing, then the symbol, finally the alphabet--hence the hieroglyph, the cuneiform, and the Chinese vs. the Indo-European lettering.

Obviously, people spoke before they wrote, and clearly the orthodox standard language of any people was arrived at after a long period of formation, transformation, and final approval of the accepted group leaders. Again, it must always be remembered that language is a part of the human, and is always in flux just as people, individuals and groups, are always on the move. The great historical invasions of Europe of which the wars are only the great reminders, were the tidal wave, but the individual ripple is always there, although unnoticed.

Language is a means of communication, and so depends on human contact. In the ancient world such was through invasion, war, and commerce. The Invader was usually less civilized and consequently accepted the language of the outnumbered but more cultured victim--civilization. The Conqueror imposed his language. The merchant learned to speak many languages in order to increase his sales. Contemporary analogies are like bacteria TNC--too numerous to count--and that with TV too!

Language is the seed of the nation. It is through language that a people, an ethnic group, is distinguished and differentiated. It is language that carries the culture of a people. One does not have to go as far as Jung's theory of the Archetype and Collective Unconscious, but one must accept the genetic findings of Mendel and his successors. The language gets into the very blood stream of a people, and it is no surprise that even little kids in France speak French, as some American tourist is said to have thought. Witness how Alexander made the world his through the use of Greek, witness the Roman Empire through Latin, the British control through English,

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and the present American influence through our language. Remember the bitter Alsace-Lorraine struggle over German vs. French as the official language; look at the present Canadian crisis. Language! Only a day or so ago, a man in Madras, India, committed suicide because Hindi has been made the official language, and thus the Vedic supplants the Dravidian in the southlands of Tamil. Need I mention the various dialects in Europe, the triumphant Basque who talks only to his own in the Pyrenees, aloof to both the French and the Spanish, as well as the patois and colloquialisms in this country?

Such is the power of the word!

To speak of Latin is in large part to speak of Greek, of Etruscan, Oscan, Umbrian, Faliscan. The Latin alphabet without G, J, U, W, Y, was formed from the Greek alphabet which in turn was derived from the Phoenician script of the 8th century B.C. It was originally thought that the Romans learned their writing directly from the Greeks in Cumae in Campania, Italy, a colony of Chalcis in Euboea, Greece. Now it is accepted that they learned the alphabet indirectly from the Greeks and directly from the Etruscans,who indeed were their rulers for some two hundred years. The Etruscans in turn brought their script with them from the neighborhood of Corinth when they migrated to Italy. Much is conjecture. My reasoning is, that since travel in antiquity was rare and dangerous, that since Cumae is farther from Rome than was Etruria whose outermost citadel was the very Janiculum Hill of Rome today, and since the very names of the original Latin tribes--Ramnes, Tities, Luceres--are Etruscan, not to mention the Lares, so sacred to the Roman family, and the Etruscan name of Lars, and since the contact of the Romans with the Greeks in Magna Craecia in the south of Italy and Sicily is in the diplomatic 4th century rather than the formative 8th century, and further, that since the written Laws of the Twelve Tables date from 451-450, i.e., the 5th century while the Lapis Niger and Praenestine Fibula are still earlier--my reasoning, I would say decisively leads to the theory of direct Etruscan derivation. Epigraphy and Paleography are our classical sciences here.

Now, since we are dealing with the Latin language, we must make a distinction between Latin and Roman. The Latins, we know, were historically indigenous to the upper central northwest coast of Italy. But what of the Romans? There are theories and conjectures again. Virgil, with his poetic dreamer's genius, his devotion to the very soil of Italy, his dedication to the Peace of Augustus established after a century of political conniving, slaughter, cliques, cabals, revolution and counterrevolution, from the murder of the Tribune, Ti. Gracchus, in 133, through the bloody mayhem of Marius and Sulla, the First Triumvirate, the civil war of Caesar, his assassination, the Second Triumvirate, the civil war of Octavian and Anthony, then Actium, and in B.C. 27, the Pax Augusta--Virgil could not but see the divine in peace. So he gives us the divinity of the Julian family from the Trojan hero, Aeneas, his goddess mother, Aphrodite, his little boy, Julius; then Mars mates with his progeny--thus Romulus and Remus are twice divine, through Venus and Mars, thus Augustus Caesar is twice blessed, and so are all his offspring--thus War-Strife and Peace-Love are united. This is indeed beautiful poetry! Livy tells us in his preface of the History of Rome (Ab Urbe Condita) that such is myth, but it is pretty, it is Roman, and he intends to repeat it for all it is worth. Modern archeology has discovered the remains of Roman graves, hearths, and house poles beneath the Capitoline Hill; so one thing for sure, the Romans bear all the anthropological marks of an Indo-European people. But, did they just cross over the Alban Hills from the Latin Alba Longa, being adventurous or outcast from the Latins, their people, or did they migrate from Asia Minor, Troy, driven by the destitute force of war and invasion? Let us try to amalgamate Myth and Archeology. There is always some truth in myth, and always much fact in science. I like to think that the Romans did come from some place in Asia Minor--it doesn't have to be Troy--that they were fleeing before the force of a lost war and the grim image of famine and

slavery, not to say death. The picture of Aeneas, a man carrying his feeble father on his back, and his little boy by the hand, urging on a weakening wife who couldn't quite make it, and holding on to the last remains of his family heirlooms--is indeed the picture of a man, of men, who have fought their hearts out, lost, but are not broken. History gives us this picture as a fact--and if such is poetic, I can only say that I succumb easily to what I feel is true, even though not provable.

However, for the purpose of language investigation, Latin and Roman are the same thing. Our knowledge of early Latin is only fragmentary. Such is the research purpose of epigraphy and paleography. For what we do have, we owe an eternal gratitude to the monumental works of E. H. Warmington (Loeb 1925), J. Vahlens (1928), O. Ribbeck, Dessau, and the ever active C. I. L., Corpus of Latin Inscriptions, started in 1863. These fragmentary items, from a literary perspective, are from the works of Livius Andronicus (284-204), the credited father of Latin literature, the writers of epic and tragedy, Accius, Pacuvius, Naevius and Ennius' Annals (239-169). There are also older fragments of religious formulae, practically unintelligible--e.g., satur fu fere Mars, as well as that celebrated quotation from Ennius who in attempting the thesis of the Greek poets, i.e., when a compound word is divided and a word or words are inserted between the parts for metrical reasons--a device used most effectively by Vergil and Lucretius--Ennius in the infancy of Latin literature writes: cere comminuit brum, where he not just poetically separates the cerebrum or head, but literally smashes it, as comminuit means.

These writers are of the 3rd century. However it is at the end of this century and in the fullness of the 2nd century that Latin literature digs in its roots deeply. This is because of the Punic Wars which give Rome empire, wealth, leisure, and education. Rome inherits the commerce, the possessions of Carthage and comes into direct contact with the encyclopedic sophistication of Greek culture, both the Alexandrian or Hellenistic milieu, as well as the ancient pre-Aristotelian Hellenic world of Homer and the Tragedians, the lyric poets, Sappho, the presocratic philosophers. Romans are now no longer farmers, but gentlemen farmers. They send their sons to the great universities of Athens, Rhodes, and Alexandria, and in spite of the stern warnings of conservatives like Cato, they begin to learn and read Greek themselves, much, I suppose, like the English Puritans sneaked in a bit of Voltaire or Boccacio, on the sly with one eye over their shoulder, or like the American Mrs. Grundy who reads her novels only with a brown paper covering over their titles.

Being Romans with their ethos of dignitas, severitas, mos majorum, fama et gloria after death, they aimed their education at the law. Art, literature, and philosophy were only incidental stepping stones. Such was the official policy. But great men such as Scipio were able to throw off the cloak enough to openly support writers. This is the Scipionic circle, the first literary coterie, sponsored and under the aegis of a wealthy and important personage. Today we have our Madison Avenue publishers, our Broadway theatre angels, and our Fords and Guggenheims--the foundations. But the classics were first in this venture, it is apparent.

Plautus (251-191) didn't quite get into the circle, but only because he lived before it. For our linguistic pursuits we must mention him in comparison with Terence (195-159), both writers of Fabula Pallista, Greek comedy in Roman dress. Terence was not just accepted but was the fair-haired boy of these distinguished politicians, writers and critics. Among the Scipionic set were Laelius, his close friend, the great Caecilius and Lucilius, the putative father of Roman satire. They write poetry, as well as Fabula Togata or the Roman version of Greek tragedy.

In our comparison of these two comic writers, Plautus and Terence, we have the opportunity to apply the information of Quintilian's great work on letters and education, the Institutio Oratoria (ca. 35-100 A.D.). Quintilian speaks of literary Latin, Sermo Cotidianus or talk among friends, and vulgar Latin spoken by the uneducated. And most people, it must be remembered, were uneducated.

It is in the Circle of Maecenas, under the benevolent paternalism of Augustus that we find the floruit of literary Latin, the Golden Age, Horace, Vergil, the lost Gallus. Here, too, is the less propagandized Circle of Messalla, less propagandized because although he was a staunch republican, which was the external form of Augustus' policy, he was somewhat leary of the internal machinations of the Principate, and though he was not reprehended, he was ignored. In this group we find Propertius, Tibullus, Lygdamus, and even a lady, Sulpicia. Then there was the ribald rake, the independent scallawag, the brilliant stylist, and the surprisingly sober and serious scholar (as in the Fasti and Metamorphoses), Ovid. Ovid, however, was reprehended, and exiled to Tomi on the Black Sea--reasons unknown. But, in that Augustus also summarily banished his own daughter and granddaughter, the two Julias, around the same time for not acting like proper ladies, and in that Ovid's Art of Love had been published of which he appears to be not just author, but actor--one can make a not too wild guess!

Such is the Golden Age of Latin, the classical Latin which we know best. But already it had gone through its formation and transformation--the original Etruscan-Greek influence, the contact with the Celts in the north, the Greeks again in the university. In Plautus we find the colloquial and vulgar Latin of the man on the street. Remember this is war time, post and pre. There are soldiers about and big city goings-on. Grand opera would hardly be popular with them. Plautus needed money, and a bawdy joke and the burlesque house always bring a high price and many customers. While Plautus wrote for the enlisted man, Terence hobnobbed with the generals. Hence his elegant language, his almost Ciceonian periodicity and eloquence.

Cicero! We couldn't leave him out, could we? He said so himself, ever so often! But in spite of his famous "How long, O Catiline, will you drench our ears with your rot"--which students usually apply to the Latin teacher, it is Cicero to whom the Latin language owes its greatest debt. In the last days of the Republic we have three great writers, the lyric Catullus, the didactic Lucretius, and Cicero, the orator, essayist, letter-writer, less a philosopher, an embarrassingly bad poet, but a first rate rhetorician (the Orator, De Oratore).

On Catullus we would like to dwell at length, but suffice it to say that he was a bright, provincial boy, ardent in his learning and in his love, brilliantly conversant with the Hellenic writers, naively unaware of the true character of his Lesbia. He died of a broken heart, while Lesbia--Lady Clodia's slaves were busy preparing her toilette for the next conquest. Catullus is called a Neoteric or avante-garde, not to be confused with our "Beat Generation" who are not ahead of the times, but usually high school drop-outs. The terms Neoteric, Alexandrian, or Cantores Euphorionis best relate by analogy to the age of Shelly, Keats, Swinburne and Byron, to the time of Shaw, Joyce, and Yeats, to the Twenties in the U.S. with Fitzgerald, Huxley, Eliot, Hemingway. These authors were men of letters, brilliant, rebellious, but creative, not nihilistic. As to be suspected, the Latin of Catullus is at times colloquial, at times vulgar, interspersed with his knowledge of Greek--the French au courant touch of English--but in the main formally classical.

Lucretius, on the other hand, loved archaisms. We won't go into his Epicurean theme, his literary suppression, his calumniated biography--all of which I am at present writing about in a dissertation on his side completely--but we will content ourselves to say that in his De Rerum Natura he speaks frequently of the egestas linguae nostrae, the vocabulary poverty of the Latin language. Now, vocabulary is the basis of language, standardized in orthography or spelling, and morphology or form, inflection, declension. As for archaism in spelling, for example, Lucretius uses ecum instead of equum, animantum for animantium. He is not as archaic as Plautus, who uses eapse for ipsa and quoi for cui among many other examples, consistently, but he tends in that direction. Lucretius does this on purpose because he is preaching a doctrine that he would like an ordinary reader, not an intellectual, to understand and accept.

But Cicero saw to it that such did not happen. Cicero read Lucretius' manuscript and saw truly that it was completely destructive of the Roman Way, but he did not see the philosophy nor the moral intention. He saw the genius and the artist, as he tells his brother Quintus in a letter. Then in his political way he lets Lucretius fade into obscurity simply by not referring to him in his works. His example was followed by later writers. In antiquity mentioning the name of a writer and even quoting in line was an honor and publicity, not plagiarism.

While Lucretius was talking about the poverty of Latin, Cicero was boasting that anything which could be said in Greek could be said better in Latin. This is not exactly true. Greek is a synthetic language, poetic rather than logical, while Latin is fixed and formal. Greek must be translated kata synesin, i.e., according to the general flow of thought, while to translate Latin the same way, secundum sensum, is devastatingly disastrous without a thorough knowledge of vocabulary. Witness your students who try it! However, it is this patriotic boast of Cicero which led to the translations of Aristotle and Plato into Latin, thus giving us our philosophic vocabulary. It was this determination which fixed the syntactical foundation for Horace and Vergil to build upon. And they have influenced the world as we know it.

The sermo cotidianus, chit-chat, conversation among friends, colloquialism, was always a perspective of the Latin language, as of any. Such is characterized by diminutives, break down in strict sentence formation, rambling, wit, and other private and informal speech habits both in talking and letter writing--even among the educated. If I may put myself in that class, say I am at home and someone knocks on the door. "Who is it?", I say. "It is I," comes the reply. Now, although I recognize the voice and open the door, I can't help wondering why on earth he didn't say, "It's me." The same among the Romans.

Vulgar Latin, the speech of the masses, was always ungrammatical, full of slang, coined words, and words borrowed from the national origin of the many who milled around the city of Rome, soldiers, slaves, freedmen, uneducated people and provincials attracted to the glittering metropolis. It paved the way for the vernaculars and Romance languages of Europe. Such is seen in Plautus, appears again in Petronius in the Neronian period, and after the great Teutonic, Gothic, Hunnish invasions it became the language of Europe--hence, St. Jerome's Vulgate, the translation of the Bible into the way people spoke.

After the Golden Age of Augustus comes suppression, suspicion, proscription, exile, the delatores, the informers of the schizoid Tiberius, the paranoid antics of Caligula, who defied his horse Incitatus; the palace intrigues and murder of Claudius; and lastly, the manic-depressive depravity and rapacity of Nero, the last of the

divine Julio-Claudian dynasty--a reign of unbridled imperial passion, open murder of his friends, as Petronius, his rival Brittanicus, his wife Octavia, his tutor Seneca, and his mother Agrippina. Language and literature did not flourish as madness stalked and raged through the bloodstream of a ravaged Rome. Education was reduced to imitation of Vergil and Horace, and Cicero became a basis for idle rules of declamation rather than political protest. Then came revolution and the establishment of the Flavian dynasty--the last of whom, says Tacitus of Domitian, was a second Tiberius. Tongues were stilled.

With the advent of the Spanish emperors, Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian, came the fresh air of morality and freedom. Words pour forth in torrents, terse, journalistic, epigrammatic, full of pent-up emotion and hastening to say as much as possible in the fewest words in fear lest this one moment of free speech might again be banished by imperial decree. This is the age of Silver Latin, of Juvenal, Martial, Tacitus, Suetonius. The colloquial and the vulgar idioms have increased in proportion as the Empire consists more of slaves and freedmen than citizens. The noble Roman, with his love of the soil, the hills and vines, the streams and fountains, the belief in law and honor in the military, is almost extinct. Nero saw to that in his liquidation ad lib. and in the proscription of the conspirators under Piso.

After Hadrian and in spite of the efforts of Marcus Aurelius, the Empire crumbles, totters, and crashes before the invaders from the north. Latin and Christianity saved the day. This is the age of Patristics, of Tertullian, Jerome, Augustine, who in the main were classical in style, but vernacular of necessity in speech. These invaders, though non-Latin, were Indo-European. Let me briefly sketch a chart to demonstrate this linguistic relationship.

P.I.E. is the archetype mother tongue--Primitive Indo-European--which has left the living languages.

Indo-European - English, German, Greek, Latin, Welsh, Irish, Lithuanian, Russian, Sanscrit, Persian, the Romance languages.

Let us now group these:

1. Indo-Iranic - i.e., Sanskrit and later vernaculars as Hindi, Bengali, and Persian.

2. Armenic - i.e., Armenian.

3. Albanic - i.e., Albanian.

4. Hellenic - i.e., Greek, ancient and modern.

5. Italic - Latin, which in turn is the ancestor of the Romance languages: Roumanian, Italian, Provencal-Catalan, French, Spanish, Portugese.

6. Celtic - Welsh, Irish, Scotch, Gaelic, Breton.

7. Germanic - Gothic, Swedish-Danish, Norwegian-Icelandic, English, Dutch-Flemish, German.

8. Balto-Slavic - i.e., Lithuanian, Lettish, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovene, Russian, Polish, Czech (Bohemian), Slovak.

Thus in a way of speaking linguistically, we might say that in the invasions of Rome, the country cousins came calling on their city relatives--but did they have to make so much noise about it!

English, although related to Latin through the common Indo-European ancestry, has passed through and with it both directly and indirectly.

1. The Roman occupation of Britain (43 B.C.-410 A.D.)
   e.g., (L) castra, (Celtic) ceaster, (English) chester

2. The Anglo-Saxon Period, ca 449
   e.g., (L) vallum, (A.S.) weall, (English) wall

3. Norman French Period (A.D. 1066-1200)
   e.g., (L) caldarium, (N.F.) caudron, (English) caldron

4. Old French Period (A.D. 1200-1500)
   e.g., (L) bonitas, (O.F.) bontet, (English) bounty

This last meeting of French and English has given rise to words called doublets, that is, there are two English words from one Latin, as dainty and dignity, costume and custom. Again in English we have hybrid words, part English, part Latin, as talk-ative. Again, there are loan words taken over directly from Latin, as arbiter and campus, not to mention the coined technical vocabularies of all the sciences.

What I have to say now must for time be necessarily compressed. The Middle Ages extend from Cassiodorus and Boethius 6th century A.D. to Dante. They are far from dark. Latin is the official church and diplomatic language, often full of barbarism and solecisms. Vulgar Latin is spoken, joins with the various ethnical dialects, and so gives rise to the national languages of Europe. I can only refer you to Migne-Patrologia Latina, and the Monumenta Germaniae Historia, Harrington, Raby, and Waddell for illustrations. A word, however, must be said about the Carolingian Renaissance with its heroic efforts under Alcuin to restore the purity of classical Latin, but the barbarisms were here to stay.

After Dante--the Great Renaissance--the Monastery Schools, the Palace Schools, and the Cathedral Schools give way to the university, from Vivarium and Fulda to Aix-la-Chapelle, to Lyon and Rheims, now Bolcgne and Paris. This is the age of manuscript research, the rediscovery of Greek, and book editing. Names are legion, from Petrarch to the Medici family, to Niccolo de Niccoli, Scala, Poggio, Valla and Pontanus. All played a fateful role in the destined continuity of the classics. This might be called the Humanistic Revival culminating in the perfect Ciceronian of Erasmus in the 15th century, but by then reditus doesn't mean "return" but "income".

The clarion call to modern classical studies came with August Boeckh in the 18th century--Altertumswissenschaft--and then the daring challenge of Wolff's Prolegomenon ad Homerum, 1876, which questioned the unity of Homer. And so on and on to Mommsen, Bursian, Wilamovitz to Jaeger, whose teaching-fellow I had the great honor to be at Harvard.

The classics made the university. It is the basis of the old Arts and Sciences, and furnished the substance for the new; Schliemann and archeology, Frazer and anthropology. There is not just evolution in Darwin, but in Lucretius, too, and even in Thales in the 6th century B.C. Freud and Jung--the field of psychology without the classics could not exist.

Now we are in the Space Age--but Leucippus, Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius long since wrote of atoms and space.

Perh ps what is happening to Latin and Greek--the classics--today in our American school system, secondary and college level, is that we classicists have lost our spunk, and are letting ourselves be pushed around. Like the old folks who have already made the deed of the house over to the kids, and have written them in as insurance beneficiaries, we are letting them make us eat in the kitchen out of pans and crockery so as not to embarrass them or guests by breaking the good china or dropping the good silverware in the dining room.

Now is the time for some cliches to take on meaning, like "The war isn't over yet," "Old soldiers never die." As far as I am concerned we have already "seen the whites of their eyes," so "fire away," and "full speed ahead." "We have not yet begun to fight!"

I have little to say for high school administrators who are attempting to demote, debase, or eradicate Latin from the curriculum. I would like to think that no one, especially an educator, would deliberately invoke a Dark Age, and cut the cultural life-line of America and the Western World.

I do think, however, that the subject needs some overhauling--less Caesar, and more Nepos; less Cicero and Catiline, and more of his essays, as the one on Friendship; how about the 4th Book of the Aeneid, the love story of Dido and Aeneas?--teenagers are always in that mood. And some of the odes of Horace are sheer beauty and wisdom. I still believe in educating to the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.

College administrators would do well to consider that while big scientific grants might build big campuses, they also produce technical machines, not human personalities, without the human experience of language and literature. And if the classics were reduced to the humble status of existing only to turn out modern language translations, to be a cultural janitor so to speak, they are still necessary. But in themselves they must ever be living for the reason that they are the creative product of humanity--and all living organisms grow.